

On the Application of

will ultimately issue in transcendent brightness, and that the evil itself in this world will at a future period almost cease. He is persuaded that the Great Spirit, who presides over this mysterious scene, has an energy of influence yet in reserve to beam forth on the earth, such as its inhabitants have never, except in a few momentary glimpses, beheld; and that when the predestined period is completed for his kingdom to come, he will command this chaos of turbulent and malignant elements to become transformed into a fair and happy moral world.

And is it not strange, my dear friend, to observe how carefully some philosophers, who deplore the condition of the world, and profess to expect its melioration, keep their speculations clear of every idea of divine interposition ? No builders of houses or cities were ever more attentive to guard against the access of flood or fire. If *He* should but touch their prospective theories of improvement, they would renounce them, as defiled and fit only for vulgar fanaticism. Their system of Providence would be profaned by the intrusion of the Almighty. Man is to effect an apotheosis for himself, by the hopeful process of exhausting his corruptions. And should it take a long series of ages, vices, and woes, to reach this glorious attainment, patience may sustain itself the while by the thought that when it is realized, it will be burdened with no duty of religious gratitude. No time is too long to wait, no cost too deep to incur, for the triumph of proving that we have no need of a Divinity, regarded as possessing that one attribute which makes it delightful to acknowledge such a Being, the benevolence that would make us happy. But even if this noble self-sufficiency cannot be realized, the independence of spirit which has laboured for it must not sink at last into piety. This afflicted world, " this poor terrestrial citadel of man," is to lock its gates, and keep its miseries, rather than admit the degradation of receiving help from God.

I wish it were not true that even men who firmly believe in the general doctrine of the divine government of the world, are often betrayed into the impiety of attaching an excessive importance to human agency in its events. How easily a creature of their own species is transformed by a sympathetic pride into a God before them ! If what they deem the cause of truth and justice, advances with a splendid front of dis-